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The investigators were interested in: what portions of the Higher Horizons Program could be replicable; measurable changes in student achievement; attitudes and habits as a result of the experiment; and school and community dynamics which precipitated and accompanied innovations.

Certain features of the Higher Horizons Program for culturally disadvantaged children were attempted in the seventh grade of Jacox Junior High School in Norfolk, Virginia. An in-service reading program for teachers, a program of increased direct teacher-parent relationships, a program of increased group guidance, and a program of intra-school cultural enrichment were included in the experiment. The cost of replicating the principles and procedures designed to help culturally deprived children make better use of education was not exorbitant.

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REPLICATIONS OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE HIGHER HORIZONS PROGRAM IN A SOUTHERN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Introduction

One of the most heartening and heart-warming developments in education today is the gradual awakening of the profession and the public to the inequitable plight of culturally disadvantaged children in the public schools. One by one the great opinion-making institutions of school and society are turning their attention and energy to the problem. Researchers are accumulating enlightening facts about the dynamics involved in the education of the culturally disadvantaged child, some basic principles are beginning to emerge and books are beginning to appear. At least one university has initiated a graduate program designed to prepare educators for service with children in blighted areas.

Widespread innovations in education come slowly, however, and where great reservoirs of cultural disadvantage are located, change often comes slowest of all. The way to an advanced soceity in those areas, however, will, in all probability, have to include rapid and widespread use of the research findings concerning the culturally disadvantaged to spur the development of the children and youth of the area. Something of this sort seems completely necessary if the masses of highly literate and highly trained people, which the economy and

government of such a society would require, are to become a reality. Other areas of the nation also have an abiding interest in change in this manner as some areas are not only great repositories of cultural disadvantage, they are too often great exporters of this commodity.

As aforementioned, a rather large number of principles have emerged from research and study of culturally disadvantaged children. It seems safe at this point to state that educators are fairly certain of the techniques which will motivate and facilitate the learning of these children. Further, several large and well publicized projects designed to demonstrate the basic principles of teaching the culturally disadvantaged have met with enormous success. The great needs at this point seem to be: (1) The further dissemination of techniques and procedures for teaching the culturally disadvantaged; and (2) the facilitation of innovations in school systems designed to make these procedures a part of the on-going instructional processes.

Purpose of Study

The present study was designed as an innovation involving a modified replication of one of the more successful demonstration projects, The Higher Horizons Program of New York City. The investigators were interested in identifying the easily replicable aspects of the program in a Southern urban school and the aspects which seemed too difficult or impossible to replicate. They were interested in the measurable changes in student achievement as a result of the experiment and in the intangible changes in their attitudes and values and habits. They were also interested in the school and community dynamics which precipitated and accompanied the innovation involved in the program.

Method

The sample involved in this study consisted of the entire entering seventh grade class of Jacox Jr. High School of Norfolk, Virginia. The class totaled 301 students. Jacox is one of nine junior high schools in the city system. Its staff and student population are all Negro. The majority of its students come from culturally disadvantaged homes. The median IQ of this group was 88. The personal-social problems and academic inadequacies which hampered the efforts of these students to gain efficiently from formal instruction were the same problems and inadequacies which hamper the efforts of culturally disadvantaged youth everywhere. Briefly stated these include the following:

1. Difficulty in mastering reading due to an un-literate heritage and subsequent difficulties in understanding what is going on in formal classes.

2. Inadequate motivation for "book learning" from home and community.

3. Inadequate concepts of the world of work resulting in unrealistic or at least stifled career goals.

4. Inadequate concepts of themselves as persons resulting in low aspirations for achievement.

Faculty planning in this school had, for many years, searched for some methods to deal with this situation. This planning was given impetus by the attendance of a large portion of the faculty at a lecture by Dr. Daniel Schreiber who was then coordinator of The Higher Horizons program. The lecture was given in the spring of 1960 and sponsored by a local civic group and was held at the local college. The principal and head guidance counselor of the school discussed the program further with Dr. Schreiber after the lecture and arranged to observe the program in action on a trip to New York.

The faculty then discussed the program in their planning for the next year's program. They received the report of the principal's and counselor's observations and selected those features of the program which they felt to be both applicable to the needs of their students and within the limits of the resources of the school. The features included the following:

1. A reading program where each teacher learned reading skills in-service and used them in reading exercises in the classroom. The program also utilized the library and parent support.

2. A program of increased direct teacher-parent relationships designed to draw attention to the student's academic inadequacies and to enlist parent and community aid in student motivation and in the provision of study hours and improved physical conditions for study.

3. A program of increased group guidance designed to heighten occupational awareness on the part of the students and to lift self concepts which are often low in disadvantaged minority groups.

4. A program of intra-school cultural enrichment designed to lower aesthetic sensory thresholds and deepen the need for self expression.

The major aspects of The Higher Horizons Program which were not attempted were:

1. The expansion of the counseling staff.

2. The addition of remedial reading and mathematics specialists.

3. The attendance of students at commercially sponsored cultural programs.

4. The addition of a part-time psychologist and social worker.

5. The addition of a supervisor of the cultural enrichment program.

Budget was a major factor in the decision to forego these aspects of the Higher Horizons Program. A dearth in the community of the types of cultural

programs mentioned in number 3 was also a factor. Further, the counseling staff was already near the strength of Higher Horizons with a ratio of about 350 to 1 as compared to 375 to 1, the latter having been reduced from 2,000 to 1.

A description of some of the procedures of the program includes the following:

1. The students were given the California Achievement Test Form AA in Reading and Arithmetic in September, 1961. The median reading grade placement score was 5.2. The median arithmetic grade placement score was 5.8. A total of 298 students were tested.

2. Seventh grade teachers and counselors studied the test results and pinpointed the students' specific difficulties in reading and arithmetic.

3. All seventh grade core teachers met on their free period once a week to learn techniques for teaching one new reading skill each month. The skills were taught by a Jacox teacher trained to teach reading skills.

4. Department Heads and other teachers met on free periods bi-monthly to learn new facts about reading instruction.

5. All seventh grade core teachers taught a reading skill each month and tested students with teacher made tests at the end of the month. The teacher made tests were complete with answer sheets and were designed to develop test wisdom as well as to check on mastery of reading skills. Graphs were made monthly to show the progress of each seventh grade group.

6. Parents were encouraged through the P.T.A. and room meetings to require students to spend at least one-half hour each night reading some type of book. Specialists from the local college shared with parents the results of studies which showed that the achievement level of children can be raised through more reading and discussion of books at home.

7. The P.T.A. staged a contest and awarded prizes to students who read the most books during the term as certified in writing by their parents.

8. A Book Week was held and the parents came to school and enthusiastically browsed and bought paperback editions of the best recommended reference books and classics on display by the librarians. Students also bought large numbers of paperbacks. The purpose of this activity was to stimulate parents to provide inexpensive home libraries and to promote home reading.

9. Parents met with teachers after school and during P.T.A. meetings to discuss their children's progress. The telephone was also utilized to a great extent.

10. Three elementary school teachers who were trained to teach reading came in to share their knowhow with two of the Jacox teachers who worked with an ungraded group of students after school. One of these Jacox teachers later taught a small group of special reading students during the school day while the other Jacox teacher continued the after school reading group.

11. Some Jacox teachers enrolled in the Reading Course in the Evening College at the local college.

12. Suggested Lists of books were prepared by the Librarians and the Head of the English Department. These lists were taken home by students and were used by core teachers to encourage outside pleasure reading.

13. The Mathematics Department adopted a schedule for working on certain needed mathematical skills each month. Five, ten and twenty minute drills were given on certain days. Emphasis was also placed on reading and problem solving in Mathematics. Reading materials were taken from Be A Better Reader, Book I, II, III, - Prentice Hall, Inc.

14. Correct behavior patterns for boys and girls were discussed and encouraged through group guidance activities and during homeroom periods.

15. Groups of seventh grade students were taken on trips to Richmond, Virginia; Washington, D. C.; and locally to visit the museum and the Secondary School Art Exhibit. The class also visited the Monitor and Merrimac exhibit at the Little Creek Amphibious Base.

16. Assembly programs which included performances by outstanding local musical groups and dance groups were sponsored.

17. Each department in the school planned an Open House Day and students participated in all of these activities.

18. Occupational information was stressed through assembly programs and group guidance meetings. Negro achievers were pointed up through the invitation of outstanding speakers, through bulletin boards and through reading.

19. Students visited an iron foundry, a hospital, the local college, the local naval base, a department store, a dairy and a restored colonial home. Occupations were stressed in these visits.

Results

As aforementioned, the investigators were interested in both measurable changes and in changes which were difficult or impossible to measure. Two of the easily measured, but very basic and important changes were in the areasof reading and arithmetic.

In September, 1961, Form AA of the California Achievement Test in Reading and Arithmetic was administered. The reading mean grade placement score was 5.2 and the arithmetic was 5.8. When the norm of 7.0 is used as a base, the entering seventh grade students were retarded in reading by an average of 1.8 years and in arithmetic by an average of 1.2 years.

In May, 1962, Form BB of the test was administered. The reading gain of the students averaged 1.5 years as contrasted with the expected gain of .8 year for the period September to May. The May mean was 6.7 years. The over-gain of the students in reading averaged .7 year and as a result of this over-gain the students were retarded by an average of 1.1 years at the end of the school year as contrasted with an average retardation of 1.8 years at the beginning of the school year. To bring the students abreast of national norms in reading, such an over-gain would have to be accomplished for approximately an additional year and a half of school instruction. This estimate assumes that there will be no over-gain and little losses during the vacation months

and that the growth in reading during the ensuing year will approximate the former growth evidenced by the group the previous year.

The arithmetic gains were significant but like the Higher Horizons group, they were smaller. The May arithmetic means were 6.6 as compared to the September mean of 5.8. The over-gain, using 7.0 as a basis was .6 year. Table I contains further data.

When juxataposed with a Higher Horizons sample, the results of the innovational approach compare favorably but it is clear that the process of change is slower and that full remediation will perhaps take longer. For example, the Higher Horizons group over-gained an average of .9 year in reading during seven months of instruction while the over-gain of the present sample was .7 year for eight months of instruction. It is also important to note that the former group began with an average retardation rate of 1.3 years as opposed to 1.8 for the latter and that the Higher Horizons group averaged the same amount of over-gain for a three year period of instruction thereby gaining more than two and a half years in reading in three years.

TABLE I

MEAN READING AND ARITHMETIC PERFORMANCE OF A CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED SEVENTH GRADE SAMPLE OF 298 PUPILS AS A RESULT OF INSTRUCTION UTILIZING CERTAIN HIGHER HORIZONS PROCEDURES

	California Achievement Test Form AA (September) Group Mean	SD	Norm Mean	Mean Group Retardation	California Achievement Test Form BB (May) Group Mean	Over-gain	SD	Norm Mean	Mean Group Retardation
Reading	5.2	1.7	7.0	1.8	*6.7	.7	.7	7.8	1.1
Arithmetic	5.8	1.6	7.0	1.2	*6.6	.6	.6	7.8	1.2

*Difference between October and May Test for sample significant at .01 percent level of confidence (test of t).

The faculty also expects a cumulative gain over the Junior High School years in IQ and in science and social studies scores. Perhaps the best index of faculty opinion concerning the innovations was the unanimous vote to continue the project for the present group in the 8th and 9th grades and for the entering 7th graders. Subjective evaluations of parent response also indicated a favorable change in their attitudes and approaches to child-rearing practices. The program seemed to serve as a rallying force for the P.T.A. The attendance of this group improved and many of the motivational aspects of the project were undertaken by the body as a whole.

Discussion

The dynamics of this sort of innovation are perhaps as important as the results in the scheme of things today. The results of this study give a valuable indication of what can be done with a modified, low budget version of the Higher Horizons program. The dynamics of instructional change in this school followed the pattern of change noted by most researchers in this area and it is perhaps well to compare these at this point.

Henry Brickell, in studying the dynamics of instructional change in schools in New York State, noted the following:

1. That schools as structured social institutions tend to to remain quite stable and to resist change.

2. Contrary to widespread opinion, large scale instructional innovations are not <u>initiated</u> by the board of education or by the faculty. They are mainly the province of the principal. The basic <u>planning</u> for successful programs must be done by the faculty, however.

3. The most persuasive experience in the decision to innovate is for those involved to visit a successful program and to observe in action. (Agricultural experiment and demonstration stations utilize this medium to a great extent.)

4. Highly unusual features of the program visited i.e., exorbitant budget, have a debilitating effect on its adoption elsewhere.

5. The most successful innovations are those which utilize complete teacher planning for the program.

6. Commercial organizations such as textbook publishers are extremely powerful both as initiators and inhibitors of change. (1)

Parallels to Brickell's findings in the present study were the wide experiences in joint planning of the faculty, the constant attempts over the years to use research findings in the development of the instructional program and the faculty habits of foraging far afield for new ideas. The nature and scope of the instructional program not only reflects this quality in the faculty but was undoubtedly a factor in the success of the innovations. Jacox operates closed circuit television classes, team teaching, language laboratories, some aspects of programmed instruction, individualized reading instruction and classes for the mentally retarded.

Following these principles, attention might be focused on the school administrators by parties interested in dissemination and innovation in schools for culturally disadvantaged children. Funds might be provided for visits for observations of successful programs in action. Publishers of instructional materials might also be persuaded to make a shift in the format and approaches to give impetus to such innovation. There is only one school in the country which makes use of such materials and this oddly enough (but with a large measure of success) is the Muslim school of Chicago which wrote and published its own elementary school textbooks replete with slums instead of suburbs as motifs and mixed ethnic groups as characters. (The Detroit public schools are experimenting with such this term.)

The history of educational change has also included a large contribution to the impetus, for change by labor unions, women's groups and organizations

for the improvement and advancement of mankind or of one of the sub-cultures of mankind. All of these groups should have, it would seem, an abiding interest in improving the lot of the culturally disadvantaged child and in doing the necessary things to provide what John Fischer has termed the compensatory educational opportunities which are basic to their utilization of the opportunities of the American educational system, economy and social heritage.

The investigators arrived at basically the same conclusion as the Higher Horizons teachers concerning the efficacy of remediation in the junior high school. The problems at this stage have been cumulative for so long that they are infinitely confounded. The Higher Horizons approach would be far more effective in the lower grades. From the investigator's experiences with these children, at all levels of schooling, it would seem that innovation is certainly necessary in the readiness programs, in the first grade and at grades four and five. For it is at these points, respectively, that the child must make over-gains in a limited vocabulary and begin to value the "book learning" which is too often derogated in his culture, learn to follow directions and to work with the speed which is foreign to his culture, and finally make the great transition to the reading centered curriculum which is difficult for most children and too often an Armageddon for the culturally disadvantaged.

Finally, the investigators observed what may become the strength needed in the efforts to foster innovations in schools with culturally disadvantaged children. This strength is in the motivations and insights of the teachers who work with these children. The repository of equalitarianism, experience and empathy necessary to achieve success with children of such a culture might well be found more in teachers with culturally restricted backgrounds

who have lifted themselves by their boot-straps. The South is full of people of this description and Southern teachers of Negro ancestry might well prove an unusual resource. Frank Riessman has stated a similar postulate in his Culturally Deprived Child. (5) Teacher education programs in colleges would seem to have a grave responsibility here concerning the psychological preparation of teachers of the culturally disadvantaged. Too often investigators have found a psychological rejection of these children on the part of culturally mobile teachers which might constitute a strong deterrent to innovation. (2,6) In the main, however, it would seem that the time is quite ripe for a large scale educational change in this direction.

Replications of the principles and procedures designed to help culturally disadvantaged children make better use of public education can, according to this study, be carried out in any school. The cost will not be exorbitant and the problem and effort involved in innovation will be far out-weighed by the good which comes to children who have been given an extra lift along the road to a better heritage and to teachers who feel directly and responsibly involved in a good work.

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